

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

SAB-01 SSM-03 PRS-01 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:TJCAROLAN:PDW

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

NEA/ARN:MDRAPER

IO/UNP:POAKLEY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 011388

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, XF, UN

SUBJECT: U.S. APPROACH TO CURRENT SECURITY COUNCIL
DEBATE ON ME

1. JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR SALAH CALLED ON ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON JAN 14 TO ASCERTAIN U.S. VIEWS RE
CURRENT SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE, PRIOR TO RETURNING TO
AMMAN FOR CONSULTATIONS. FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS
MADE BY ATHERTON IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

2. AFTER PROVIDING BACKGROUND RE HIS DECEMBER VISITS TO
KEY ME CAPITALS AND U.S. POSITION RE CURRENT SC DEBATE
(ESSENTIALLY SAME AS THAT CONTAINED PARA 2, STATE 6788),
ATHERTON SAID WE HAD EXPECTED THAT SC DEBATE WOULD FOCUS

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MAINLY ON PALESTINIAN QUESTION. HE HAD REITERATED

THROUGHOUT HIS ME TRIP OUR VIEW THAT ANY ME SETTLEMENT MUST TAKE LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT AND THAT PALESTINIAN VIEWS MUST SOMEHOW BE INCLUDED IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS. AT SAME TIME, WE REMAIN OPPOSED TO HAVING QUESTIONS OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION, WHICH IN OUR VIEW CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS ITSELF, PREJUDGED BY SC ACTION. WE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT WE UNDERSTOOD TO BE SYRIAN DESIRE (WHICH SEEMS LESS APPARENT NOW) TO TRANSFORM SC INTO NEGOTIATING FORUM AT EXPENSE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. WHILE WE ENVISAGE PUTTING FORWARD NO DRAFT SC RESOLUTION OF OUR OWN, WE WERE NOT ENTERING SC WITH CLOSED MINDS--EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT WE COULD SUPPORT OR EVEN ABSTAIN FROM VETOING. SC RESES 242 AND 338 ARE RESULTS OF YEARS OF HARD WORK AND COMPROMISE AMONG SC MEMBERS AND PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED. IN SOME RESPECTS, DELICATELY-BALANCED CONTENTS OF THESE RESES ARE AMBIGUOUS AND EVEN DISPUTED, BUT THEY REPRESENT ALL THAT IT WAS HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE. WE ARE ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANY SC ACTION THAT WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF ALTERING THOSE RESES, SINCE THIS WOULD DESTROY NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK WHICH COULD NOT BE REPLACED.

3. ATHERTON TOLD SALAH THAT FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF CURRENT SC MEETINGS WE REGARD IT AS ESSENTIAL THAT SERIOUS EFFORTS BE MADE TO RESUME NEGOTIATING PROCESS WITHOUT DELAY, BEGINNING WITH TALKS DURING PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S UPCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON. WE INTEND TO TRY TO BRIDGE GAPS IN THAT PROCESS AND FIND WAYS TO AVOID POSSIBLE FUTURE STALEMATE. WE HOPE OUTCOME OF SC DEBATE WILL NOT MAKE OUR TASK MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT IS ALREADY.

4. ATHERTON NOTED THAT SC PROCEEDINGS ARE STILL IN SPEECHMAKING PHASE, WITH ARAB DELS STILL DISCUSSING POSSIBLE CONTENTS OF DRAFT RESOLUTION THEY MAY WISH TO PUT FORWARD. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING ON PAPER AS YET, ODDS ARE THAT IT MAY CONTAIN ELEMENTS THAT WOULD REQUIRE USG TO USE VETO. SALAH OBSERVED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN VOICES IN SC FAVORING A MODERATE AND CONSTRUCTIVE TEXT. ATHERTON AGREED, BUT NOTED THAT PERCEPTIONS RE WHAT SHOULD

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BE CONSIDERED "MODERATE" AND "CONSTRUCTIVE" CAN DIFFER, AND THAT IS WHY USG HAS TRIED TO MAKE CLEAR WHAT KINDS OF ELEMENTS WOULD NECESSITATE U.S. VETO. SALAH SAID THERE IS UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT RE NEED TO PRESERVE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN IN SC RESES 242 AND 338, AND THAT WHAT ARABS SEEK IS SOME INGENIOUS NEW PHRASEOLOGY THAT WILL SATISFY SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS WITHOUT REALLY ALTERING NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK. ATHERTON NOTED SARG POSITION IS THAT SC RES

242 IS 'IMPERFECT' AND THAT SOMETHING MORE--E.G., EXPLICIT CALL FOR TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND/OR CREATION OF PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND"-- IS NEEDED TO MAKE NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK COMPLETE. HE MADE CLEAR USG VIEW THAT SUCH ELEMENTS, EVEN IF NEW DRAFT SC RES MAKES NO DIRECT REFERENCE TO RESES 242 OR 338, WOULD EFFECTIVELY ALTER NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK. OUR FAILURE TO VETO RESOLUTION CONTAINING SUCH ELEMENTS WOULD EFFECTIVELY UNDERMINE OUR ABILITY TO PROMOTE FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD OVERALL ME SETTLEMENT.

5. SALAH VIEWED PLO AS HAVING ALREADY ACCEPTED SC RESES 242 AND 338, BUT ATHERTON REMINDED HIM IT HAS NEVER SAID SO EXPLICITLY. SALAH SENSED TREND IS ALREADY IN PROGRESS TOWARD U.S. RECOGNITION OF PLO AND THAT "CERTAIN UNDERSTANDINGS" ALREADY EXIST WHICH INDICATE "CONVERGENCE" OF U.S. AND PLO OPINION ON HOW TO RESOLVE CURRENT PLO-ISRAELI IMPASSE. ATHERTON REITERATED STANDARD U.S. POSITION RE PLO, NOTING THAT ALTHOUGH THERE APPEARS TO BE CONSIDERABLE FERMENT IN PLO THINKING ABOUT HOW TO ACHIEVE PARTICIPATION IN SETTLEMENT PROCESS, THIS COULD HARDLY BE DESCRIBED AS CONVERGENCE OF VIEWS PERCEIVED BY SALAH. ENTIRE CONCEPT OF GENEVA CONFERENCE, SAID ATHERTON, IS BASED ON PARTIES' ACCEPTANCE OF SC RESES 242 AND 338, AND HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HOW SOME OTHER PARTY WHICH DOES NOT ACCEPT THIS BASIC NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK COULD QUALIFY FOR ADMISSION TO SETTLEMENT PROCESS. SALAH NEVERTHELESS INSISTED THAT USG AND PLO ARE HEADED "IN SAME DIRECTION" AND ONLY PROBLEM IS WHICH SIDE WILL TAKE THE INITIAL STEP. HE NOTED THAT USG COULD HAVE WORKED HARDER TO PREVENT PLO PARTICIPATION IN CURRENT SC DEBATE. ATHERTON POINTED OUT THAT U.S. ACQUIESCENCE IN NOV 30 SC RES HAD STEMMED FROM PROCEDURAL, RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIVE CONSIDERATIONS, ONE OF SECRET

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WHICH WAS THAT VETO RIGHT COULD NOT BE EXERCISED. HE SAID USG HAD ACTED AS IT DEEMED FIT ON THAT OCCASION AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO IN CURRENT SC DEBATE. HE IMPRESSED ON SALAH THAT ANY POSITION USG ADOPTS IN COURSE OF CURRENT SC MEETINGS WILL BE BASED ON OUR OWN INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT OF U.S. INTERESTS AND OF HOW BEST TO SAFEGUARD NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND OUR OWN UNIQUE ROLE IN IT, SO AS TO LEAVE US IN BEST POSSIBLE POSITION TO INFLUENCE THAT PROCESS IN FUTURE.

6. SALAH SAW CONFLICT BETWEEN U.S. DESIRE TO SAFEGUARD NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND WHAT HE TERMED AS CONTINUING OPPORTUNITY GIVEN TO ISRAELIS TO OBSTRUCT IT IF THIS SHOULD SUIT THEM. ATHERTON STRONGLY DENIED THAT USG HAS ACCORDED ISRAEL A FREE HAND TO OBSTRUCT SETTLEMENT EFFORT,

POINTING OUT THAT WE HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MOVEMENT FROM THE ISRAELI SIDE. WHILE THERE ARE INDEED BROAD AREAS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN USG AND GOI ON PRINCIPLES TO BE PRESERVED DURING SC DEBATE, THERE STILL APPEARS TO BE SOME CONCERN IN ISRAEL ABOUT POSITION TO BE ADOPTED BY USG IN CURRENT SC MEETINGS. TO SALAH'S COMMENT THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN AGONIZINGLY SLOW, ATHERTON REPLIED THAT WE BELIEVE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN PAST TWO YEARS. OUR CHIEF CONCERN IS THAT FURTHER PROGRESS NOT BE REVERSED OR DESTROYED BY INTEMPERATE, ILL-CONSIDERED ACTIONS BY PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED. KISSINGER

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